

# Psychology 471: PERSONALITY

10:00 - 11:50 pm MTWR

189 PLC June 21 - July 16, 2010 CRN: 42330

**Instructor:** Amber Gayle Thalmayer, 309 Straub, athalmay@uoregon.edu

**Office Hours:** Tues & Thurs, 12 - 12:30 (after class) or by appointment

**TEXTS:** Funder, D. C. (2007). *The Personality Puzzle* (5th ed.) New York: Norton

Nettle, D. (2008). *Personality: What makes you the way you are.* New York: Oxford University Press

## Course Objectives

The study of personality addresses how and why individuals differ in behavior patterns, with 'behavior' defined broadly to include thoughts, feelings, motives, intentions, and action tendencies. The purpose of this course is to help you learn ways of thinking usefully and critically about human behavior, using the most important concepts and findings of personality psychology. We hope to both promote knowledge of personality and to sharpen thinking skills. Knowledge of personality psychology is useful not only in psychology and human services professions, but in any work or life experiences involving people.

Personality psychology is a "crossroads" field with links to many other disciplines. It includes both the study of individual differences and the study of the processes within a person that lead to stable behavioral patterns. Biological and social antecedents of personality are emphasized about equally.

This course has extensive readings, and students are expected to read everything assigned.

## Grading

Daily assignments – 11 assigned, 2 points possible each	20
Extra credit: Either do 11th assignment or participate in research study	
Participation in class	5
Proposal for Paper	5
Midterm Exam 20 multiple choice items, ½ pt. each + 2 essay questions 5 pts each	20
Outline of Research Paper	5
Final research paper	20
Presentation of research topic	5
Final exam same format as midterm	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**A** = 90+; **B** = 80 - 89, **C** = 70 - 79, **D** = 60 - 69, **F** = > 60

+/- added to grades in top or bottom third. A+ grades are assigned at instructors' discretion.

## Course Schedule (NOT FINALIZED)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings (before class)</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>M 6/21</b>	Syllabus; overview of Personality Sources of data	Funder ch. 1	
<b>T 6/22</b>	Research methods	Funder ch. 2 - 3	Daily Assignment #1 *
<b>W 6/23</b>	Personality Assessment	Funder ch. 5 - 6	Daily Assignment #2
<b>R 6/24</b>	Personality traits Lexical studies	Funder ch. 4 & 7 (pp. 171-2, 199-203) Nettle Intro + ch. 1	Paper question(s) Daily Assignment #3
<b>M 6/28</b>	Big Five traits	Funder ch. 7 (203-9, 181-3) Nettle chapters 3, 5-7**	Paper proposal Daily Assignment #4
<b>T 6/29</b>	Big Five traits continued Values, Worldviews?	Nettle ch. 4 & 7	Daily Assignment #5
<b>W 6/30</b>	Psychopathology	Funder ch. 18	Daily Assignment #6
<b>R 7/1</b>	Catch-up before exam <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>		
<b>M 7/5</b>	Evolutionary & genetic influences on personality	Funder ch. 9 Nettle ch. 2 & 8	Outline research paper Daily Assignment #7
<b>T 7/6</b>	Culture and personality Values, Worldviews	Funder ch. 7 (213-17) & 14	Daily Assignment #8
<b>W 7/7</b>	Anatomy/Physiology of Personality	Funder Ch. 8	Daily Assignment #9
<b>R 7/8</b>	Psychoanalytic theories	Funder ch. 10 & 11	Daily Assignment #10
<b>M 7/12</b>	Neo-Freudians & Humanistic theories	Funder ch. 12 & 13	RESEARCH PAPER
<b>T 7/13</b>	Behaviorism and Social Learning Personality Change	Funder ch. 15+ Nettle ch. 9	Daily Assignment #11
<b>W 7/14</b>	Conclusion and Presentations	Funder ch. 19	Prepare to speak about paper (3 min.)
<b>R 7/15</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>		

\* Assignments detailed at end of previous lecture's slides, or in 'course documents' on Bb.

\*\* skip from 172 to the last paragraph of 177 if short on time

## GRADED COMPONENTS

### I. Daily Written Assignments

These are intended to help you develop a connection to the subject matter by applying course concepts to your experience. Each assignment should have complete sentences, good grammar, and reasonable organization. They should show thought and familiarity with the reading assignment, and be 1-2 typed, double-spaced page(s) of text. Assignments can be turned in at class or emailed before class, with assignment number in subject line. May not be turned in late. Eleven will be assigned; you only need to complete 10 of them.

### II. Participation

Points are based on attendance and participation in class discussions and activities.

### III. Exams

50% of the points will be for multiple-choice questions drawn from material covered in the assigned readings and in class, 50% for mini-essay questions (choose 2 of 3 to answer). Mini-essay questions are drawn from the “big questions” list on blackboard. Mini-essay responses should take one page or less. No dictionaries, thesauruses, calculators, or electronic devices can be used during exams, except translating dictionaries for those with English fluency issues, with permission.

### IV. Research Paper

The research paper is designed to deepen your understanding of personality psychology by exploring a question that interests you. You must use at least four peer-reviewed journal articles (one book chapter is ok, but no dissertation abstracts or popular press articles) that address your question. Topic proposals are subject to approval by instructor. Paper components **lose 10% of points for each day late**.

¶ Week 1: Skim the textbooks, looking for topic areas that interest you. Articulate a question about personality. Caveat: It must be a question that is addressed by empirical research. For example:

- Can people change their personality traits if they decide they'd like to be different?
- Do couples with more similar traits have happier relationships?
- Do early life experiences form our personalities, in the ways Freud theorized?
- What is the best way to measure individual differences in intelligence?

Due Thursday: Email or turn in a clearly stated question. Ideally include an alternate idea or two.

¶ Week 2. Paper Proposal, due Monday, 6/28

Search the literature for empirical articles on the topic you have chosen. Write a paragraph or two describing your question and why it should be of interest to psychologists and/or the public. Identify at least four articles you might use. You will want to find articles that argue for slightly different answers to your question. List them in APA reference page format, and include their abstracts.

*Instructor may make alterations to your topic, or recommend different readings.*

Graded on: Coherent topic, readability, appropriate articles

¶ Week 3: Paper Outline, due Monday, 7/5

Peruse the articles you have chosen, and plan the organization of your paper.

Broadly, it will look something like this:

- I. The question, why it is interesting and relevant, why we would want to know the answer.
- II. Perspective #1 – how one researcher approached the question, and what they found.

- III. Perspective #2 – how another group approached it or built on the first group, and what they found.
- IV. Perspective #3 . . . (if needed) – how a third researcher approached this (etc.)
- V. Summary and synthesis: compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches, what was most compelling.
- VI. What you have taken away from your reading as an answer to your question, what you might still like to know, and how this addresses the need/relevance identified at beginning.

How many different perspectives you describe and whether/where you place overviews of what you're about to cover or interim summaries will depend on your topic and your style.

Outline graded on:

- 1. Organization and focus. Enough detail to allow instructor to follow your thoughts
- 2. Addresses what makes the question practically and scientifically important
- 3. Identifies more than one point of view
- 4. Mentions some supporting evidence for and against each perspective; indication that you will evaluate such evidence in terms of relevance, reliability, validity, quality of research, etc.
- 5. Indication of a synthesis of both perspectives and comes to a reasonable conclusion

¶ Week 4: Final Paper, due 10 a.m. Wednesday, 8/14

Final paper should be 5-6 double-spaced pages (not counting references) in APA format, including 12-point Times New Roman font. Graded on:

- 1. Format, readability, lack of gross spelling and typographical errors
- 2. Organization and focus
- 3. Defines key terms clearly, especially ambiguous terms
- 4. Addresses what makes issue practically and scientifically important
- 5. Clearly and effectively communicates about more than one approach or point of view
- 6. Discusses supporting evidence for and against each perspective; evaluates such evidence in terms of relevance, reliability, validity, quality of research
- 7. Attempts a synthesis of the different perspectives and comes to a reasonable conclusion
- 8. Demonstrates original thoughts and ideas and appropriately cites thoughts and ideas of others
- 9. Includes a minimum of *four* scholarly sources (Must be peer-reviewed journal articles. One may be a book chapter. You may reference course texts, but these will not count for the four.)

Presentation in class, Wednesday 8/14

You will be asked to speak about what you learned while writing your paper. We need to average 2-3 minutes per person for everyone to get a chance to speak, so brevity will be valued! Basically, state the question you sought to answer, what you learned about current approaches to answering it, and something about the conclusion you came to.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity will be taken seriously. Insuring the validity of grades requires that they reflect honest work and learning. **Cheating** is defined as providing or accepting information to or from another student on an exam or copying anyone's written work. Students caught cheating will be given an **F** for the course, and the student conduct coordinator will be informed. **Plagiarism** is putting your name on work or even ideas that are in any part not yours, where you have not fully identified the source from which you borrowed. In writing, always distinguish between your own ideas and those you have from others, and be sure to appropriately credit these.